

Message Text

SECRET

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ORIGIN EA-09

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 105246 TOSEC 110527

FOL REPEAT OF WELLINGTON 1568 TO SECSTATE INFO CANBERRA SUVA
BONN MOSCOW CINCPAC CINCPACFLT SECDEF APR 27

QTE:

S E C R E T WELLINGTON 1568

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD (PLEASE PASS TO AMBASSADOR SELDEN)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, PFOR, EAID, TN, UR

SUBJ: SOVIET-TONGAN RELATIONS: RUMORED SOVIET NAVAL BASE IN TONGA

REF: SUVA 438 (NOTAL)

1. WEST GERMAN AMBASSADOR TO NEW ZEALAND DR. OTTO
SOLTMANN CALLED ON CHARGE APRIL 27 ABOUT WHAT
HE SAID WERE RUMORS IN TONGA THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAD
SOUGHT PERMISSION TO ESTABLISH A NAVAL BASE IN TONGA.
ACCORDING TO REPORTS SOLTMANN HAD RECEIVED FROM THE
HONORARY WEST GERMAN CONSUL IN NUKUALOFA, THE RUMORS
BEGAN TO CIRCULATE AFTER SOVIET AMBASSADOR
SELYANINOV PRESENTED HIS CREDENTIALS
TO KING OF TONGA AS THE SOVIET UNION'S FIRST
AMBASSADOR TO TONGA (REFTEL). SELYANINOV, ACCORDING
TO RUMORS, HAD PUT NAVAL BASE PROPOSITION

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DIRECTLY TO THE KING. SITE OF PROPOSED BASE WAS DEEP

WATER SHELTER AT VAVAU (REFTEL).

2. HONORARY GERMAN CONSUL HAD BEEN UNABLE TO DETERMINE IF THERE WAS ANY SUBSTANCE TO RUMORS. HOWEVER, WHEN CONSUL LEARNED THAT CORRESPONDENT OF WEST GERMAN NEWSPAPER "FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG" HAD APPOINTMENT TO CALL ON KING OF TONGA, CONSUL HAD ARRANGED FOR CORRESPONDENT TO ASK KING ABOUT NAVAL BASE RUMOR. WHEN CORRESPONDENT DID SO, KING WAS SAID TO HAVE GIVEN EVASIVE REPLY. SOLTSMANN THOUGHT NAVAL BASE RUMOR APPEARED UNLIKELY TO BE TRUE, BUT COMBINATION OF REAL TONGAN NEED FOR ASSISTANCE AND NAIVETE IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS ON PART OF KING OF TONGA, MIGHT HAVE LED THE KING TO FLIRT WITH IDEA OF MAKING SOME KIND OF DEAL WITH SOVIETS.

3. WHEN SOLTSMANN ASKED IF THIS EMBASSY HAD HEARD RUMORS, CHARGE SAID WE HAD RECEIVED REPORT FROM AMBASSADOR SELDEN DESCRIBING OFFERS OF ASSISTANCE TO TONGA MADE BY SOVIET AMBASSADOR SELYANINOV DURING LATTER'S RECENT VISIT TO TONGA. HOWEVER, WE HAD HEARD NOTHING ABOUT A NAVAL BASE. EMBASSY UNDERTOOK TO REPORT CONVERSATION WITH SOLTSMANN.

4. COMMENT: EMBASSY TENDS TO AGREE WITH SOLTSMANN THAT NAVAL BASE RUMOR MAY WELL BE EXAGGERATED. HOWEVER, SOMETHING LIKE A CALL BY A SOVIET NAVAL VESSEL, OR SOME KIND OF AN ANCHORAGE, MIGHT HAVE BEEN MENTIONED BY SELYANINOV TO THE KING.

WE WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING ANYTHING DEPARTMENT OR OTHER ADDRESSEES MAY HAVE ON THIS SUBJECT.

KILLGORE
UNQTE SISCO

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